

Executive Summary

CLUSTER CHARACTERISTICS

Cluster 3 has a number of significant assets, including:

- its location on the Detroit River with a significant amount of publicly accessible park land;
- stable neighborhoods and attractive housing stock (including some historic districts) in some portions of the Cluster, as well as immediate proximity to the attractive housing stock of the Grosse Pointes;
- a large number of housing improvement initiatives underway by non-profit and for profit developers;
- a significant employment concentration along the Conner/St. Jean corridor; and
- a number important institutional anchors including Wayne County Community College and several hospitals (St. John, Riverview, and Mercy).

Despite its assets, a significant loss of housing stock has occurred in parts of the Cluster, creating areas of vacant land, much of which is owned by the City. These areas present significant opportunities for new housing development in combination with housing rehab and infill. Cluster 3 stakeholders strongly support the master planning of these areas with community input for development as mixed use and mixed income communities, rather than as series of uncoordinated projects. In addition, reinvestment in these areas must be carefully staged to build on stable neighborhood "edges" and to create a critical mass of revitalized housing.

Concurrent with its loss of residents and housing stock, many older commercial strips in Cluster 3 have lost their appeal as business investment locations. As housing reinvestment occurs and the area's population grows, its appeal as a neighborhood commercial reinvestment location will also increase. Cluster 3 stakeholders support reinvestment in existing commercial areas with a "main street" development pattern and a pedestrian orientation (for example, on Warren at East Outer Drive and Jefferson between Eastlawn and Alter Road) and in new, small scale shopping centers (50,000 square feet or less).

Cluster 3's Warren/Conner intersection offers an outstanding location for a large scale commercial development (200,000 or more square feet). Stakeholders endorse a mixed use approach to development in this area (including retail, entertainment, community services, civic

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spaces, non-retail jobs and higher density housing) in a pattern that maximizes walkability and includes pedestrian and transit links to neighborhoods, job centers and nearby Chandler Park. A strong voice in shaping development plans and decisions is very important to Cluster 3 stakeholders.

Cluster 3 stakeholders believe that the most productive strategy for creating new jobs is to concentrate on entrepreneurial support and small business recruitment and start-up – with a special emphasis on promoting the development of successful African American owned and operated businesses. Job training, apprenticeship and internship programs developed in partnership with educational institutions, labor unions and businesses and non-profits are also critical to the success of reinvestment in the community.

A clean, safe, attractive, walkable environment is also an important priority in Cluster 3. Stakeholders are willing and able to assist the City in providing better enforcement of existing laws and ordinances and taking over the maintenance of vacant lots. They support the protection and expansion of green space and public access on the riverfront and the development of greenway linkages from the River to neighborhoods north of Jefferson.

Cluster 3 stakeholders recognize that community, as well as professional, support is needed to provide a continuum of family/youth support services – including education, prevention and intervention – to address the many challenges children and families face from birth to young adulthood. In addition, stakeholders are looking for an enhanced community role in working with the Boards of educational institutions (including the Detroit Public Schools and institutions of higher education) to increase accountability and responsiveness in providing an effective system of lifelong learning.

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PRIORITY

REINVESTMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhood Commercial

Increased Range and Quality of Commercial Uses

Encourage an increased range and improved quality of neighborhood-serving commercial uses (particularly grocery stores, restaurants/entertainment and hardware stores) to meet resident needs and "capture" an increasing percentage of stakeholders' consumer expenditures within Cluster 3 and the City.

Locally Owned and Operated Retail/Service Business Development

Give particular emphasis to promoting small, locally owned and operated retail and service business development, especially African-American owned and operated businesses. (See Job Centers.)

- Provide technical support and facilitate access to financing by establishing a small business/entrepreneurship center within the Cluster.
- Provide affordable space to lease in incubator buildings located to capitalize on market potential.

Cluster-based Business Development Organization

Establish a Cluster-based business development organization (or a consortium of existing organizations) to:

- Give Cluster stakeholders a strong voice in shaping commercial development plans/decisions for the area by ensuring that residents and local businesses are represented on the Board of the organization
- Forge consensus on policy directions and funding priorities for the Cluster
- Encourage locally owned and operated business start-ups and facilitate the formation of partnerships between local entrepreneurs and successful local and non-local business people/investors
- Work with the City to obtain help in assembling land, obtaining financing, capitalizing on development incentives and reducing red tape to promote commercial reinvestment
- Document the buying power/unmet market potential of the Cluster in order to encourage investment

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- Assist in marketing commercial reinvestment locations and encouraging investment

Housing

Areas of Significant Disinvestment

Encourage new housing development, rehab and infill in areas that have experienced significant disinvestment and improvement efforts are not yet underway. Select target areas for new housing construction, rehab and infill reinvestment that:

- Contain enough vacant, assembled land to create a critical mass of new housing
- Are located to build on a stable (or successfully revitalizing) neighborhood edge.

Master plan these areas as mixed-use communities including commercial, civic and service uses, open spaces and a range of housing opportunities (owner, renter, mix of prices, lot sizes and architectural styles), rather than developing them piecemeal.

Code Enforcement

Improve property maintenance/appearance by working with the City to define strategies for improving code enforcement with increased citizen involvement.

- Provide frequent code inspections with stakeholders working in partnership with code enforcement officials to identify and report code violations and monitor compliance progress.
- Assign specific code enforcement officers to serve the area (possibly based at Neighborhood City Hall).

Housing Initiatives Planned and Underway

Target programs and resources to reinforce the success of housing improvement initiatives already planned and underway:

- Islandview and West Village areas (Kercheval to Jefferson between East Grand Boulevard and Van Dyke) - new single and multifamily housing; rehab and infill
- East Village area (Kercheval to Jefferson west of Cadillac) - rehab and infill
- Fellowship, Inc. housing improvement target area (between Warren and Mack from Seminole to McClellan) - rehab and infill; paint-up/fix-up

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- Graimark area - new housing and rehab
- South of Freud and west of Conner (Clairpointe area) - affordable single family housing
- South of Averill from Alter to Lakewood - rehab and infill; paint-up/fix-up
- Morningside Commons area (between Warren and Mack) - new construction; rehab and infill

For example, by:

- Strengthening neighborhood and non-profit housing development organizations
- Providing resources to support master planning and coordination among organizations
- Spot demolition
- Low interest home repair and improvement loans
- Concentrated code enforcement
- Crime watch; community policing
- Infrastructure improvements (roads, street lighting, parks, etc.)
- Tax incentives (freeze or forgiveness on improvement value) for rehabs
- Low interest rehab loans
- Home Buyers Club and low-interest mortgages
- Subsidies for housing rehab and infill/new construction to make housing affordable to lower income households
- Transfer of city-owned surplus property to qualified non-profits

Job Centers

Entrepreneurial Support and Small Business Recruitment

Promote the creation of more jobs by concentrating on entrepreneurial support and small business recruitment and start-up, especially in the retail and service sectors and for African-American owned/operated firms by developing, and seeking funding for:

- A small business/entrepreneurship center to provide business planning and technical assistance/support and facilitate access to financing.
- Affordable space to lease in "incubator" buildings, catering to different business types (e.g., retail, small scale manufacturing/production, recycling).

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Job Training

Give high priority to supporting existing, and developing new, job training and retraining centers in the Cluster to serve area and City residents by:

- Developing programs and strategies to increase resident awareness of existing programs through improved outreach (e.g., Wayne Family Training Center, Job Corps, Detroit Works, Detroit Economic Collaborative of Churches; Family Independence Agency; Michigan Employment Securities Administration) and establishing a forum for coordinating programs to ensure that resources are used efficiently/effectively.
- Developing partnerships with area educational institutions (Wayne County Community College; Golightly Voc Tech Center, Wayne State University), labor unions and businesses (manufacturing, health care, retail, service, etc.) to design and implement job skills programs, provide on-the-job apprenticeships and give job training graduates a direct link to employers/employment.
- Developing, and seeking funding for, training and apprenticeship programs in housing repair, rehab and new construction (at both the contractor and skilled construction trades levels) , working in partnership with private companies/contractors and non-profit programs (such as Habitat for Humanity)

Cluster-based Business Development Organization

Establish a Cluster-based organization (or consortium of existing organizations) devoted to working with the City (and the Empowerment Zone and Renaissance Zone Boards) to:

- Assemble land
- Provide incentives for new jobs-related development and upgrading the physical appearance and environmental compliance of existing businesses
- Facilitate access to financing
- Cut red tape
- Market Cluster 3 as a desirable/competitive jobs location.

This organization should also work with corporations/industries already based in the area to:

- Encourage job expansion
- Collaborate in developing job training programs for area residents

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- Promote the hiring of area residents
- Cooperate in improving the area housing stock to provide close-to-work living opportunities for employees
- Collaborate with other programs/businesses to provide affordable, quality daycare

Transportation

Transit

Improve the perceived safety of public transit by:

- Assigning police officers, or police reserves, to ride buses
- Providing attractively designed, easily recognizable well lit shelters (with mapped routes and schedules) at important stops (to be designated with community input)

Encourage Detroit and regional, public and private transit providers to collaborate in providing improved service from the Cluster to important City of Detroit and suburban destinations, as well as between activity centers within the Cluster.

- Give priority to routes serving major employment, education/training and shopping destinations.
- Promote the location of transfer points (linking city, suburban and Cluster service) at mixed use centers within the Cluster (e.g., Warren/Conner and/or Jefferson/Conner).
- Encourage the expanded use of shuttles sponsored by businesses/corporations and non-profits to enhance access to jobs, job training, shopping, day care, etc.

Auto Insurance

Develop a city-wide strategy for reducing auto insurance rates.

- Identify and independently measure those factors which contribute to higher rates.
- Reduce the incidence of those factors (e.g., unrecovered car thefts, accident rates, poor road conditions).
- Ask for/increase City representation on the State Insurance Commission.

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Environment

Riverfront/Greenway Linkages

Protect and expand green space and public access on the riverfront and link neighborhoods to the River with greenways and walk and bike routes.

- Maintain public access to and use of all City-owned riverfront parks.

Contaminated Sites/Environmental Issues

Have the City Department of Environmental Affairs create remedial action plans for brownfield sites and other environmentally degraded areas in the Cluster including, for example, Fox Creek combined sewer overflows and the high incidence of lead poisoning in some areas.

Sale of Vacant Lots

To improve the maintenance of vacant lots and encourage their productive re-use, give property owners the right (and the first opportunity) to purchase adjacent, vacant parcels; give qualified non-profit development organizations the opportunity to purchase vacant parcels not acquired by adjacent property owners.

Youth Development

Continuum of Services

Provide a continuum of family/youth support services including education, prevention and intervention programs that provide professional and community support in addressing the challenges children and families face from birth to young adulthood.

City Commitment to Job Training/Creation

Increase City commitment to job training and job creation through youth employment programs sponsored by City departments (Parks and Recreation, DPW) and economic development efforts.

- Create jobs close to home so that commuting to the suburbs is not necessary.
- Link economic development incentives to youth training/employment programs.
- Link capital budget allocations/expenditures to youth employment opportunities (e.g., a percentage dedicated to training/jobs for youth).
- Encourage the Mayor to use his leadership position in stressing youth programs and youth participation.

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Education

Establish a community-controlled Task Force to work with Boards of educational institutions (including the Detroit Public Schools, alternative schools receiving public funding, community colleges and state institutions of higher education) to increase accountability and responsiveness in providing an effective system of lifelong learning.